

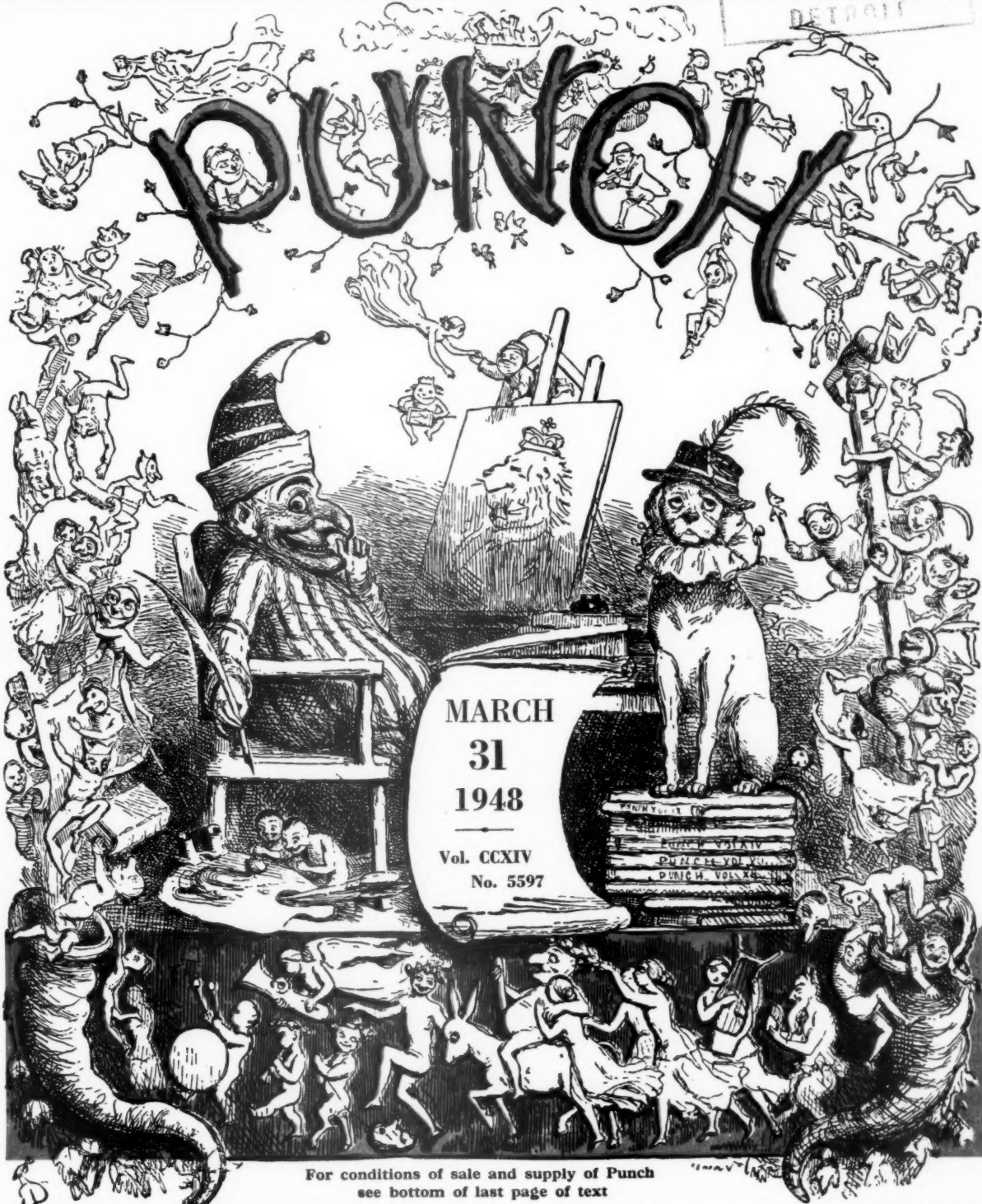
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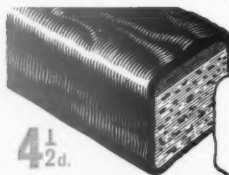
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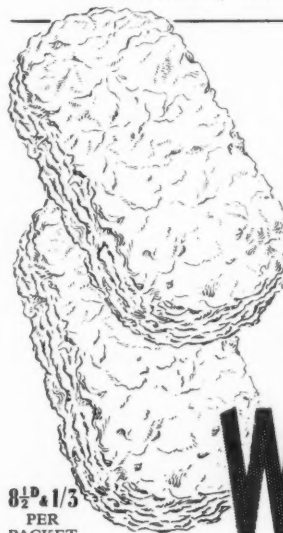
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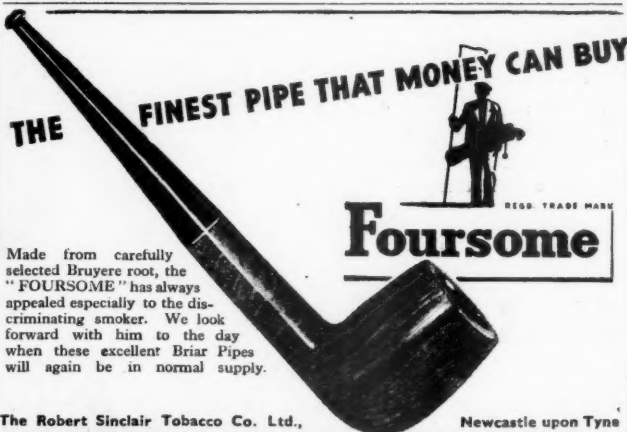
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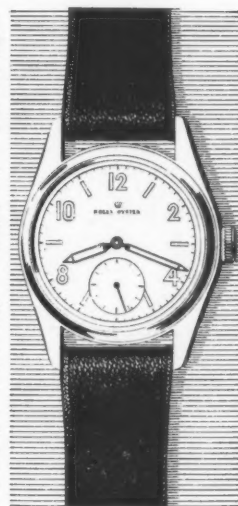
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THE ROLEX OYSTER, first waterproof, dust-proof watch in the world, is once more being imported in small quantities. Those who bought Oysters before the war know that they have a watch that is as reliable on the high seas as in the desert—yet good-looking enough for a formal dinner. The Rolex Oyster in stainless steel is a watch for a lifetime.

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ROLEX wrist chronometers

The Rolex Watch Company Ltd. (H. Wilsdorf, Governing Director)

IN THE LAND OF AQUASCUTUM...



Said the Squire after Dinner,
Sitting in his stately Manor,
Thinking grievously of Taxes,
And the punishment of Riches,
"I must go, I think, my dear,
"To the land of Aquascutum,
"I must really have a topcoat
"And a decent city set-up".
Said his wife who knew her onions,
"If you have the proper coupons,
"I advise you most sincerely,
"You can't better Aquascutum".

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Beautiful
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This very attractive Junior Miss was christened Catherine, but since childhood she has been known to everyone as "Freckles"! But no one minds, least of all Catherine, because a few freckles look perfectly natural with that lovely auburn colouring. Like most titian-haired young ladies, Catherine has fair, delicate skin that must be guarded carefully. This is a job for Mummy, who sees to it that Pears Soap and clear water are surely preparing Catherine to be a beautiful lady.

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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXIV No. 5597

March 31 1948

Charivaria

A FUEL official complains that people still won't switch off their electricity. A lot of the trouble is due to the fact that they've got so used to the Government doing these things for them.

The only clue left behind by smash-and-grab raiders in the West End was the brick they had used. The police are now said to be searching for someone whose car is not jacked up level.



"Young lady wishes to dispose of entire wardrobe in exchange for small car."—*Advt. in daily paper.*
To drive through Coventry?

A man leaving a Labour Exchange after being directed to mining fell down a manhole in the pavement. He was greatly impressed by the rapidity of the procedure.

A housewife tells us that on removing the wrapping-paper from her meat ration she felt a sharp pain in her thumb for which she could not account. Could she have been stung by a vitamin B?

"The specialist tapped my head with a little rubber hammer," writes a correspondent. This is a precaution the specialist takes in case he hits his thumb.

A writer emphasizes the importance of grasping hands across the sea. The usual procedure is to send a cruiser.

"He expressed regret and assured Mr. Mason he would have received the reply appearing in the report had it not been for the fact that he, the Town Clerk, had been tied up outside the Town Hall for a couple of days."—*Wembley Observer.*

We quite understand. Might happen to anyone.

Certain diseases are said to be inclining to more complicated forms. This is thought to be Nature's gesture to the impending State medical service.

Fishermen report seeing blue-nosed sharks off the south coast. This bears out the general opinion that it is too early yet for bathing.



Optimism Corner

"CLOCK.—Stoppages of the Church Clock in recent months have been due partly to wear, partly to weather. It is believed that both troubles have now been completely remedied."—*Parish magazine.*

If the London Underground is nationalized, will it—in conformity with the nomenclature given by the Government to the other railway systems—be known as the Nether Region?



Dramatic Notes from Paris

THERE are those who say that in Paris it is unnecessary to go to a theatre in order to find dramatic entertainment. Drama, they say, lurks at every street corner. Personally, I have found—when seeking entertainment at street corners—that the sinister-looking chaps with their coat collars turned up and their hats pulled down over their eyes who do most of the lurking there are invariably either Americans who want to know the way to Notre Dame or Frenchmen who want lights for their cigarettes. I have never met any other types at street corners, and I have tried a good many—in fashionable tourist resorts such as those containing “The Dead Rat” and “The Petrified Rabbit,” as well as in low haunts such as the Champs Elysées and the Rue de la Paix.

It was with the sombre realization that we had exhausted the possibilities of drama at street corners that Hodgkin and I decided to go to the Grand Guignol theatre in Montmartre. I bought two stalls, or *fauteuils*, for four hundred and thirty francs, or just under ten shillings each. I mention this expressly for the benefit of anyone who may be contemplating going to a theatre with Hodgkin: you have to budget for two tickets, not one.

The setting for the first two-act play was all that could be desired by the most exigent thriller addict. It was a grave-digger's cottage, dimly-lighted, and it was immediately evident that the grave-digger was a dangerous maniac. It was, moreover, very soon evident—to anyone with a command

of the French language—that he had dug up a coffin containing the corpse of his son, which he proceeded to conceal behind a curtain down left. I settled back in my *fauteuil* with a pleasant sense of apprehension.

“What's he doing that for?” whispered Hodgkin loudly. I have already been obliged to record that Hodgkin's French is not all it might be.

“We shall see in a minute,” I whispered back, but less loudly.

A haggard woman entered—R.C. Her dead-white make-up, overhanging hair and staring eyes made it clear that she was not in a gay mood. This was explained by a violent piece of dialogue indicating that she was the grave-digger's wife—no joke in itself—whom he suspected of having murdered the son.

“What are they up to?” asked Hodgkin. I explained. A lady in the row behind said “Ssst.”

Meanwhile the tempo on the stage was quickening. The cheerful couple had been joined by a *pasteur* wearing dark glasses, and the lady with the eyes was confessing to him that she had denounced her son for a murder which he had committed, and was therefore directly responsible for his premature demise.

I was listening intently to the details of this murder when Hodgkin said—he had abandoned all pretence of whispering by now—“That chap's phoney.”

I smiled grimly. Nobody could see me doing this, but I mention it to reveal the state of mind into which Hodgkin had driven me.

“My dear fellow,” I began, but was interrupted by two ladies in the row behind and a man in front, all of whom said “Ssst.” The man in front added an observation to the effect that it was formidable how persons who had paid to see a spectacle could prefer to amuse themselves by howling in *fauteuils*. The lady with him said that it was without doubt a manoeuvre of the Communists. Several more people said “Ssst.”

On stage, the *pasteur* had removed his dark glasses, revealing himself as the son, and the grave-digger had removed the curtain, revealing an arm—which later proved to be that of the real *pasteur*, recently murdered by the son—projecting from the coffin. Everyone was by now in a state of more or less advanced dementia.

Hodgkin said “I'm going out for a drink.” The *fauteuils* resounded with “Ssst.”

When the commotion caused by Hodgkin's departure had subsided, and I was again able to turn my attention to the stage, I was just in time for the dénouement. The body in the coffin was now in an upright position, the son was busily murdering the mother, from whose throat vast quantities of red ink were pouring, and the grave-digger was hurling vitriol at another character who had somehow appeared up-stage.

I joined Hodgkin in the bar. He said “I don't know if you followed that bit, old boy, but I knew that chap was phoney.”

I shall go again next week, without Hodgkin.

The Hen in the Painted Tree

IN the columns of this Irish newspaper on my desk there is printed something not wholly clear to me. It concerns a hen in a painted tree and a number of Irish countrymen, one of whom has some tongs between his legs. It all *should* be clear enough, since these lines are simply the factual report of some court proceedings. And yet, for some reason, I find the truth of it all just ever so slightly elusive, and I am genuinely anxious to have it revealed.

What goes on here? Let me once again study the evidence of Mr. Michael Mahoney and three O'Tara men whom he, Mr. Mahoney, accuses of assault. Off we go then, to a flying start.

“On the 7th of February, when plaintiff was cutting a tree on his fence near O'Tara's house, Patrick O'Tara told him to stop and said that if witness cut it down he would claim it. Sean O'Tara also came out and told him he would ‘spill blood and drink it.’ Guard Dwyer of Ballygauna came down to the tree. The Guard told him the tree was on his hedge. Seamus O'Tara asked him out to fight while the Guard was there. The Guard had it all fixed up when Seamus rushed in and hit witness, and the father pulled the coat over his head and tore it. The Guard told him to run and he ran . . . The Guard . . .”

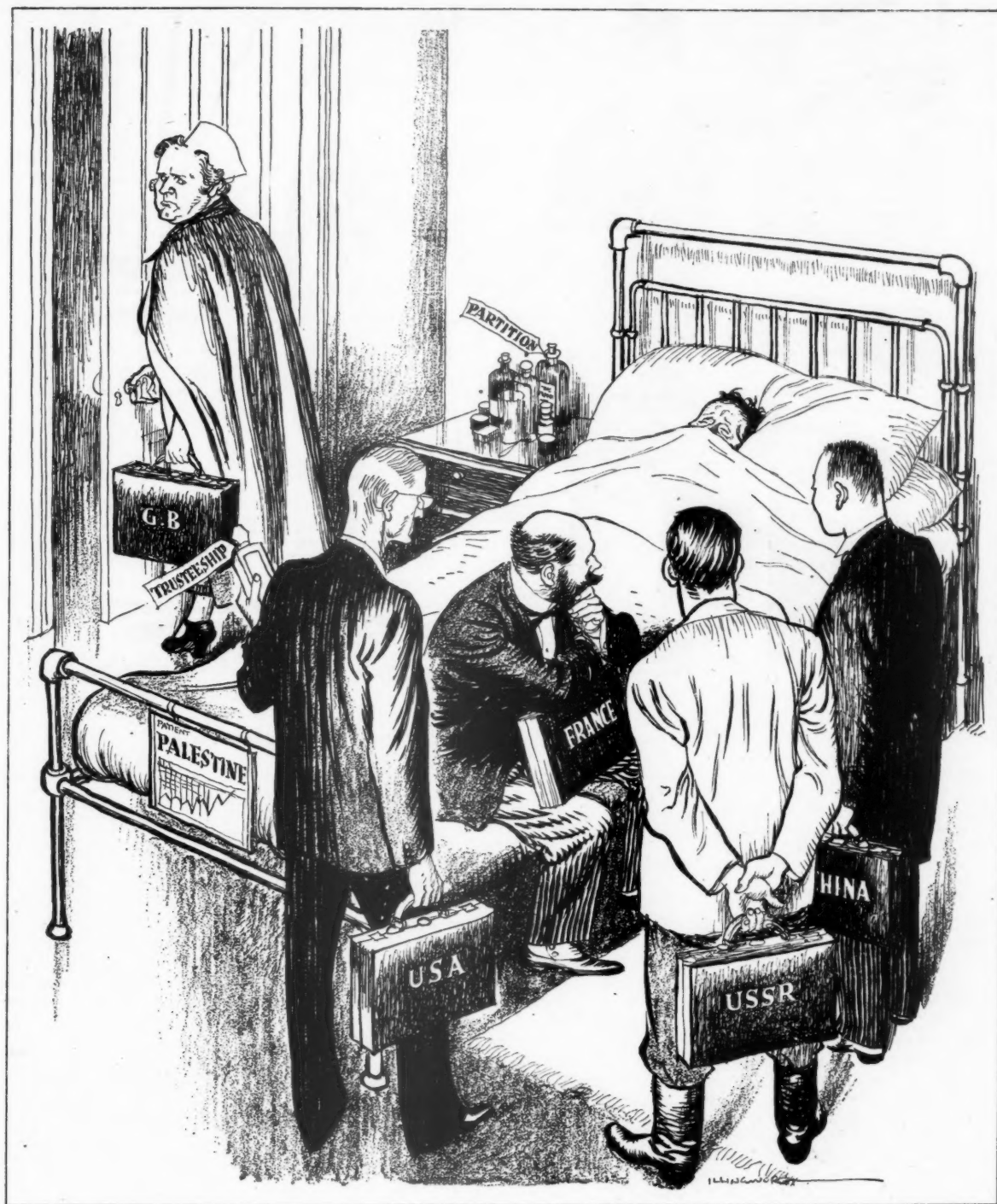
But, hoy, where are we? It is just not wholly clear to me. On whose

hedge was this tree, please? The Guard's? Or just “his”? Who is “he”? Is it the “him” whom Seamus wishes to fight, or is it Sean who desired to “spill blood and drink it”? And what, please, had the Guard fixed up? And whose torn coat was being worn over the head of the running man? I'm just not *quite* clear, but let's get on with the case. Here is Mr. O'Swithin, solicitor for the plaintiff, examining his client.

“Mr. O'Swithin: Are you afraid to go for the tree?—Yes.

“Have they put a blob of red paint on the tree?—Yes.

“Continuing, he said that when he got up he noticed the tongs was between his legs. He lived there with



NURSE GIVES NOTICE.

"And now, gentlemen, we shall have to get something done ourselves, instead of telling *her* what to do."



"Either of these, sir, I can recommend personally."

his wife and children who were in a state of terror that day."

Well, now! This blob of paint? These *tongs*? In heaven's name *what* tongs and why was they between his legs? Am I getting anywhere in assuming that, for some reason best known to himself, Patrick O'Tara placed these tongs between the legs of the man with the coat over his head while he was on the ground? Am I right, piercing through these sidelines, in guessing that these four men are quarrelling about a tree? I am wrong. Here is Mr. McDoyle for the defendants getting at the plaintiff.

"Mr. McDoyle: The tree is on a fence?—Yes, on my land.

"Was all this dispute as to the ownership of a tree?—No."

So that's that. Mr. McDoyle presses on.

"Mr. McDoyle: Was it the red paint frightened you?—No.

"What did Sean refer to when he said he would spill blood and drink it?

"I don't know.

"Is there any connection between the paint on the tree and that?—No.

"Did you see a dead hen on the tree?—No."

I—I beg your pardon? Did—he—see—a—dead—hen—on—the—tree? No, he did not. Well, I suppose that's fair enough. But he *did* see paint on the tree, and also a pair of tongs that was between his legs. He did *not*, though, see a dead hen on the tree. Is it possible that the terror of his wife and children that day was due to the fact that they *did* see a dead hen on the tree—I mean, *had* seen a dead hen on the tree? But—but what *bearing* on the case has this hypothetical hen? On with the evidence, that's the best thing to do.

"He (plaintiff) never saw the O'Taras making this fence. He did not accuse them of going into the cow-house and cutting the tail off his heifer."

Please—please, where have we landed up now? Apparently nowhere. I suspect that these hens, heifers,

tongs and blobs of paint are so many red herrings dragged in by the crafty lawyers to bemuse the witnesses. So let's get back to the tree about which nobody is disputing. Up gets Guard Dwyer, a good, responsible police witness.

"He proceeded to investigate the cutting of a tree and to see that a breach of the forestry regulations was not committed. He found it was an old bush lying in O'Tara's yard."

Not a tree at all. An old *bush*. Carry on, Guard Dwyer.

"He brought Mahoney down to O'Tara's, and the father came out, and then the son Sean came out. There was an argument and young O'Tara made a rush at Mahoney. Witness told him to stand back and the father rushed in and caught the son. The coat was pulled over Mahoney's head.

"Mr. O'Swithin: Who did that?—I don't know."

Well, Guard Dwyer, if you don't know I certainly don't. Carry on.

"When asked about the tree O'Tara

made a nasty remark. The fence was Mahoney's. O'Tara did not say he owned the tree. The row would have been serious if he had not been there."

Pardon me, but I had quite the opposite impression. Had he not "come out" there would have been no row. No, no—silly of me. The other "he," of course, Guard Dwyer who couldn't see who pulled the coat over Mahoney's head because, maybe, the old bush—I mean tree—was in the way. Sorry. Proceed, Guard Dwyer, and make all clear.

"There was a mark on Mahoney's head. He told him to go home.

"There was no conversation about red paint.

"Mr. O'Swithin: It was put on since.

"In reply to Mr. O'Swithin witness said Mrs. O'Tara came out with the tongs in her hand (Aha!) and he ordered her back. He did not know how the tongs came to be between Mahoney's legs."

Well, Guard Dwyer, nor do I, and that, apparently, concludes your evidence. Perhaps that of Sean O'Tara will help me. Is there any help here?

"He came up to the house when Mahoney and the Guard came. The Guard asked whose was the tree and his father said it was not worth the trouble. Mahoney said it was on his fence, and witness said this trouble was a long time going on and if he wanted any trouble he would get it. The Guard told him he could lay bushes against the hedge and he said he would. Mahoney said he would not fence against hens. When witness asked Mahoney did he accuse him of cutting the tails off cattle he said 'you are a liar.'

"Mr. O'Swithin: You will have to conduct yourself. You are not out in Knockadownderry now.

"Witness: O.K."

No, there is no help here. Up and at him, Mr. O'Swithin.

"Mr. O'Swithin: Did your father say it was his tree?—No.

"Is the tree growing on Mahoney's fence?—Yes."

But—but, dear heaven, what is it all about? I'm lost. And the final gruelling of O'Tara père by Mr. O'Swithin leaves me further from enlightenment than ever.

"Mr. O'Swithin: Who tore his coat?—Nobody. It was so torn it would frighten the crows.

"Asked about the hen on the tree, witness said that on St. Patrick's Day they killed a hen and hung her on the tree to let the blood drop.

"Mr. O'Swithin: You will live in peace provided you get your own way?—No.

"Did you own the tree?—I am not claiming the tree. It will be thrashed in law.

"Where did the tongs come from?—My wife was fixing the fire and she came out with it in her hand.

"What about this tree?—It is there yet.

"If he goes down what will happen?—Nothing."

I must leave the case of the Hen in the Painted Tree to its clear-cut conclusion as bandied between defendant O'Tara and the Justice of the Court.

"Justice: This man, Mahoney, is being put to expense.

"It is not my fault.

"He was hit, and you were not hit or your son was not hit?—No.

"Don't you think he should get something for that?—I tried to live on good terms with everybody."

Well, there it is.

Was not the dead hen between the tongs quite clear to you?—No.

Is it not after seeing the simple significance of the red paint that ye are?—No.

'Tis just the ignorant fool of an Englishman ye are?—Yes.

Brake, Brake, Brake

"Teddy asked Mr. and Mrs. Champ to sit on his toboggan, and he pulled them down the mountain towards the village."

Daily paper children's story.



"Ob—I say—I AM sorry."

At the Pictures

Farrebique—Corridor of Mirrors—The Woman on the Beach

IN liking *Farrebique* (Director: GEORGES ROQUIER), which has already won important critical prizes, how much is one being influenced by a sort of "snobbery of subject"? Not

the "Secrets of Nature" films (the speeding-up of plant growth and other imperceptible motion) ever before been used in a serious narrative picture?

At one point it is used to rub in with unnecessary emphasis the idea of what happens in the spring, an idea that even the most bone-headed of us hardly need to have explained; but there's not much else in the film to object to.

An art-director's field-day, full of outrageous absurdities—so one might sum up *Corridor of Mirrors* (Director: TERENCE YOUNG); and yet it's always interesting, and offers a good deal to enjoy. Apart from a highly decorative new

It will be a pity if *The Woman on the Beach* (Director: JEAN RENOIR) comes to be classified as "one of those schizophrenia pictures," one of those stories about a man with war-shattered nerves. Not that I see any sense in the practice of systematically refusing to see films that deal with a particular "subject"; but apart from that, in this instance the point is that even if *The Woman on the Beach* can be labelled as within the "cycle" referred to, it is so freshly and interestingly done that all who avoid it will be missing something. The nervous trouble of the principal character, a lieutenant in the U.S. Coast Guard, has no profound effect on the story unless it is to be blamed entirely for his temporary infatuation with the enigmatic wife (JOAN BENNETT) of a blinded painter; simply, he has nightmares, which are brilliantly, briefly and disturbingly suggested. Most impressive is the way in which the basically quite ordinary surroundings of sea and cliffs—the sort of circumstances that after all *must* have appeared often on the screen—are somehow made to seem strikingly novel. Why should the simple, uncomplicated picture of a man riding a horse at the edge of the sea stick so persistently in the mind? Somehow it does; and so do many details, visual and other, of an oddly interesting film. Great French directors who go to Hollywood are often much less lucky than this. R. M.



J.H. DOWD

[Farrebique]

GRANDSON TAKES OVER.

at all, I hope; but the fact remains that it would take a good deal of moral courage to express disapproval of almost any treatment of the great elemental themes, birth and death, the life close to the land, "the four seasons" (which is the sub-title of this picture) and so on. Happily, in this instance it is quite evident that the treatment is intelligent and imaginative and that the director has done extraordinary things with his team of non-professional players. The film is concerned with a year in the life of one family on their farm, *Farrebique*, in the Rouergue district in central France, and the people are very obviously real members of a real family, going through their customary daily and seasonal routine. One might be ready to expect that such sturdy authenticity would not fit in with imaginative (and in places startling) cinematic treatment; a harsh, straightforward, unpolished, even amateurish style is the sort of thing that is supposed to suit a picture of real people in ordinary circumstances in a sober documentary. But *Farrebique* triumphantly justifies the use of clever innovation on its simple theme. Has the key device of

star, a dark beauty named EDANA ROMNEY, and the continuous fantasmagoria of the sets (nicely photographed), what interest does it really hold? Well . . . The story is a bit of twisted nonsense about a man (ERIC PORTMAN) who thinks he once, and wishes he still, lived in fifteenth-century Italy, and has enough money to produce a colourable imitation of it in an incredibly palatial house he has in the Regent's Park district. He is also able to indulge a somewhat questionable taste for getting beautiful girls to dress in the costume of the period, and watching them in his *Corridor of Mirrors* while they do it. You hardly have to be told that the result of all this, one way and another, is a murder; he is not guilty, but he allows himself to be executed, and the beautiful girl (Miss ROMNEY) at the moment under review goes back to her husband, whereupon the whole affair is presumed to be settled. Nonsense, yes; the appeal of the picture is visual. It's worth looking at, not thinking about.



J.H. D.

[Corridor of Mirrors]

GONDOLA GAIETY

Mifanwy Conway EDANA ROMNEY
Paul Mangin ERIC PORTMAN

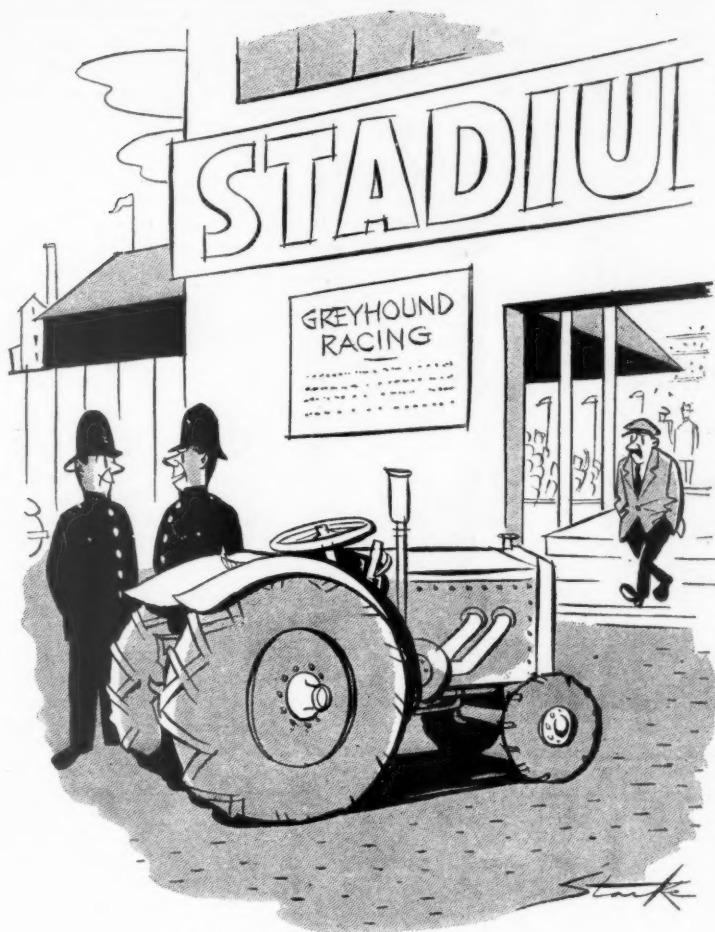
Basic

THE utter and complete selfishness of the human animal is well illustrated by my attitude to the absence of basic petrol. I suppose I am one of the few people in England who do not care a hoot or even a toot whether it is ever restored or not. Indeed, except that I should be in danger of being lynched by the rest of the population, I would come out fearlessly and frankly in favour of withholding it for ever.

Life, for me, has been much pleasanter since it was done away with. Twice a year I restore my wasting muscles by taking a walking-tour. I book a room for a week at an hotel in one of the pleasanter of the large towns near the Welsh border, and every morning I set out immediately after breakfast with the idea of walking twenty miles. During these walks I want to be alone with nature, and though I am willing to include in nature the English farm-labourer who grunts a greeting and the polite German prisoner who gives me a courteous "Good morning," I regard the appearance of motor-cars in my quiet lanes as an offence.

My holiday last August, in the bad old basic days, was completely ruined by motorists. Not content with whirling past me and disturbing my repose, many of them pulled up and had the effrontery to offer me a "lift." So great is my natural politeness that in every case I accepted the lift, and thus arrived at my destination in that bleak period before the midday opening of the hostelry, with the result that I visited more museums, ruined castles, and old churches than I have ever before packed into a week's holiday. My average morning's walk degenerated to a mere three miles, and I returned home with my muscles unrenewed.

I have just returned from my March holiday, and things have worn a very different aspect. Cars have been few and far between, and usually I have been able to walk at least nine miles before being dragooned into accepting a lift on a farm-jeep. One day I covered no less than fourteen miles without being offered a single lift, and for the last hour or so—I am very broad-minded—I re-examined the whole question of basic petrol. One wants to be fair, and I had almost come to the conclusion that it should be restored when I turned a corner and found a tiny railway-station with a train actually waiting for me. I have wondered since whether my conversion



"This should be an interesting story."

would have been completed if I had been obliged to finish my entire twenty miles on foot.

Quite apart from holidays, however, there is one other very big point in favour of retaining the ban on basic petrol. It enables a comparatively poor man like myself to converse on an equality with the club car-boasters. The club to which I belong is full of people who are always talking about their beautiful cars. Their beautiful wives and their beautiful houses do not seem to inspire them to boast, but if they have a beautiful car they want to tell everybody about it.

In the old days I used to sit in envious silence listening to them, and when Bluggershaw talked of the Splitzer Fourteen in his garage I used to reflect sadly that in my own garage, inherited from the previous occupants of our flat, there was nothing but a small lawn-mower and a couple of withered straw hats. When Pudsey

talked of his extraordinary feats of speed in his twenty-cylinder Hunz I had not the heart to match his story with my pedestrian climb up Wenlock Edge in fourteen minutes nine seconds.

Now, however, when Bluggershaw moans about his Splitzer being "off the road," and when Pudsey deplures the fact that his Hunz stands idle in his garage, I join the chorus by talking about my Mostyn Fourteen. I tell them what I paid for it and how many cylinders it has, and about its superstatic hydromesh brakes, its interchangeable gear-cocks and its atomized percussion-hub. The other car-boasters agree that it is a great shame that a car with so many absolutely revolutionary new features should be immobilized. Not until basic petrol is restored will the non-appearance of my Mostyn Fourteen on the roads make it necessary for me to confess that this curious vehicle is a mere jet-propelled Mrs. Harris. D. H. B.



"It's all right, dear—they know we're here. I heard them switch over from Itma to the Third."

H. J.'s Belles-Lettres

THIS Belle-Lettre muses round and about Signs. "What kind of Signs?" some reader may ask, anxious to get everything shipshape before starting. As I have only just begun to write, I feel entitled to object to the question. How can I possibly know whether street-signs will last me or whether, having exhausted all the types of sign there are, I shall have to fall back on sines?

On the corner of the Strand and Trafalgar Square is a News Theatre and across the entrance is the sign "World Pulse Made Easy by Arm-chair Comfort." This seems to me quite, quite admirable. It is arresting; it is fresh from the mint; it encourages the mind to wander down all sorts of bypaths. Such signs as "Stop," "Turn Left," "Back in ten minutes" belong to the mere dawn of language compared to this compressed, metaphorical prose, if prose it is: keener ears than mine may detect sprung rhythm. Of course, stark simplicity has not yet had its day. The Underground, with the cunning naïveté of "To the Trains," never fails to strike one of my deeper chords. "Concealed entrance" is another of my favourites.

Most road signs in England are very utilitarian and even verge on the Benthamite. They tell you how far you are from places and which direction is most likely to lead you to them, with an occasional warning about speed; but they do not add to your delight. Abroad, they have the pleasant custom of giving you little books of walks and then planting numbers every few yards to guide you.

At one place in the Vosges it used to be possible to go for walks that were identical, except for going to the left round a clump of bushes on walk two and to the right on walk four; but you did feel that something was being done for your entertainment. The National Trust certainly make some effort to see that you know what to look for, though they are even more anxious to explain that it is by courtesy of the National Trust you are there at all. They might well extend their services in these days of visual ignorance with such helpful signs as "Note chestnut spray," or "Reminds you of Turner, doesn't it?" In some of the mountainous districts that they specialize in one would often be grateful for the simple sign "To Flat Bit."

Signs are used instead of words, grammar, etc., by Red Indians, Boy Scouts, Tramps and other unsophisticated types, and what these signs really mean is often explained by very learned types indeed, so that there is nothing to prevent the reader from learning up one of these sign languages and joining in a correspondence, though I should advise him to eschew politics and puns. One also communicates by signs with printers, men one would have thought to be literate to a degree. Many reference books print a page already corrected in this way and an incredibly badly printed page is what it is: never have I seen the like from any printer with whom I have done business. Several of these signs are shared with maps, which is confusing, because whereas a little square on a map may mean a town of over half a million inhabitants, on a proof it means indent one em, and between these two ideas correlation is more than lowish. I have made only one serious attempt to master this sign-language and then without much success. I had written an article on "How to Correct Proofs" and thought it necessary to show the printers what, as Dr. Arnold used to say, was what. When the proof arrived I could find no errors in it, but, irked by being baulked, I borrowed one of these specimen pages and copied all the signs from it, bidding the printers to reverse letters, change to small black capitals, space out, close in, and, in fact, go through the whole gamut of printerly evolutions. When the article appeared it looked like a prescription written by a doctor while a patient.

Signs of The Times are rather sparse, it being not so much a newspaper as an Institution and hence rather restrained. By its office there is a sign saying there used to be a theatre there and hinting how the neighbourhood has gone up in the world since then.

Shop signs are mainly of interest to directors of historical films, though sometimes out-of-work artists start a little movement for reviving them. I suppose it was very picturesque when they creaked and clanked to and fro in those high winds they used to have in the eighteenth century, before fogs came in with the nineteenth; but they must have been rather hard to see, and while you were staring up, trying to decide whether you were looking at the Woolpack or the Woolsack, you risked being jostled, which, as all students of Social History know, was an ever-present peril in Olden London. Inn signs are notable for being either corrupt or painted by George Morland. The game of disentangling the corruptions and discovering what the signs began life as never fails to amuse those writers to the Sunday Press who want a respite from tracing the original composer of "God Save The King." In the future such will no doubt discover that the Ritz was originally The Writs and a well-known haunt of attorneys.

Even now they have invented the typewriter the ancient craft of sign-painting still lingers on. I first contacted this craft by falling in with a sign-painter called Broad Dacres, and a grim figure in his cummerbund was what Broad Dacres was. This garment was made of black lace



"And I STILL say there won't be a Budget leakage."

and had, in fact, begun life as a mantilla. Then it had done duty for a time as a curtain in a tea-shop called "Cuffy's Bunnery," and finally, in a sale of property found on trams, it had caught Broad Dacres' eye. All arty was this sign-painter, and when working, which he preferred to do *in situ*, he wore a very wide-brimmed hat and shouted things like "Art for Art's Sake" and "Delenda est Philistia" at passers-by. He specialized in portraits of ruminants and worked them in everywhere. Suppose, now, he was to paint a sign for "The Tara's Harp Bookshop": three-quarters of that panel would be cattle and down in one corner would be the herdsman playing the harp. I fell in with Broad Dacres through a badly bolted trap-door, and where we fell was into the cellar of a reformed public-house, just in time for a demonstration on The Use of Rocking Horses in the Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency.

A Heritage of Beauty

WITH the remaining galleries once again available to the public, and open every day without fee, the restoration of the Wallace Collection at Hertford House, Manchester Square, is now complete. When I visited the lately reopened rooms the other morning the sunlight was streaming through the window, irradiating the fragile Sèvres porcelain and bathing the Venetian scenes by Guardi and Canaletto in a golden flood of light. Canaletto's "Fête on the Grand Canal," the stately waterway crowded with gondolas and alive with little masked dominoes, is, I think, unsurpassed by any of his scenes in the Windsor Collection, and it is worthily matched by "The Doge's Palace."

The brushwork of his contemporary Guardi is more vigorous and the composition usually less formal, and these qualities, which distinguish Guardi from his better known compatriot, are perhaps best observed in the creamy little

"Dogana and Sta. Maria della Salute." In the passage leading off from this room—Gallery IX—are hung four Turner water-colours, including the radiant "Scarborough Castle," and a number of exquisite Boningtons—leaves from his travel sketch-books, as well as a few of the costume pictures which were so admired by Delacroix. In the Founders' Room the eye alights with joy on the companion bust-portraits of Elizabeth and Frances Seymour Conway, characteristically posed by Reynolds against an expanse of sky, and revealing his masterly touch in the indication of flesh tints beneath the muslin fichus.

How seldom, alas, do we discover the charm and elegance of that gracious age matched in our contemporary exhibitions. Nevertheless, the tradition of the fine craftsmen (if not, unhappily, the great painters) is still an example and an inspiration, as was evident in the twenty-first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, on view at the Guildhall Art Gallery earlier this month. "This Exhibition covers the work of a very small group of some of the best artist-craftsmen in the country," Mr. John Farleigh, the Society's President, justly remarked of a notable display of the fine and applied arts. Engravings and lithographs were exhibited with choice pieces of silver, pottery, glass and other products, with this in common—that all belong to the unbroken tradition of creative design.

N. A. D. W.

WASTE PAPER

THE need for it is serious and urgent; the need for 200,000 tons more, every year, than is being salvaged now. A great effort is being made to collect an extra 100,000 tons by July. Remember that that amount is lost every year in dustbins or by burning, and—

SAVE AND PUT OUT REGULARLY ALL THE WASTE PAPER YOU CAN FIND.





"Going into the Ministry, eh? Which one, laddie?"

Barnaby Trudge

An Episode

"COME, Barnaby. Up, up, I say. And heaven be merciful, for we must leave our home upon the instant and walk to London." With many bursting tears and moans the widow Trudge can be heard undoing her cottage door.

"Oh, mother. Mother, I say. I have but just come from walking. All over the fields I walked, mother, counting the dewdrops and laughing with the watercresses. And I've seen a man, mother—"

"Ah no, Barnaby. No. Not that. Never he. Come. Come, I say. Take these crumbs and this bunch of nettles. Whatever is to be, my lad shall not go hungry."

Their footsteps are heard upon the road as they pass along amid the sounds of the sweet summer countryside. A drover curses the cattle in a field. A group of tinkers fight over a mess of toadstools in a pot. Two young elegants ride past laughing and slashing at our wayfarers with their whips.

"I've got my bird here, mother. He'll keep us merry. He likes walking too, don't you, Trip?" A bird snarls and cries: "I'm a tripper. I'm a tripper. I'm a tripper."

Suddenly the noise of fast-moving horses startles the widow Trudge. "To me, Barnaby. To me, lad. Oh,

ashes, gloom and ruin. Great heaven help us now, for I cannot."

A coach pulls up, a window is opened and a rough voice calls: "Hey, you there! What time of the evening is it? Answer, can't you! Answer, I say."

The widow Trudge draws near with a great burst of weeping. "Alas, sir, I dare not speak. I am but a wretched widow with one son, poorly as you see. As to that you would know, my lips are sealed. Ask me no more. I dare not, dare not tell. And if you have ever hoped for mercy do not detain me now."

"Deuce take it! These must be two wretches but late escaped from Bedlam. Drive on, I say."

The rough voice shouts. The coach rolls on. The widow Trudge speaks low and fast. "Come, Barnaby, my lone lost boy. We must return whence we came. This is a dark and dreadful place. Back, back, I say."

"But mother, we have but just come here. Why must we weep and walk so, mother? When can we know what ails us?"

"Not yet, good lad. But listen close. Perchance on one Sabbath evening at the half-hour after the bells chime eight, all may be made plain. Come, come I say. Faster, faster."



SPRING DREAMS



"If the woad situation gets much worse we shall be reduced to wearing clothes."

Cold Water on the Marquis

IF I had lived two hundred years ago I should have steered clear of the Marquis of Worcester. I could never have been quite at ease in his company, and I think anyone happening to come across the January, February and March issues of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for the year 1748 would feel the same. Details of some of the Marquis's inventions are published in those issues; it was not the first time they had been revealed: the introductory letter from an admirer of the inventor (the subscription, "Yours, etc., A. B.," smacks of anonymity) begins: "It being a matter of concern to ingenious men, that the schemes of the marquis of Worcester were not brought into practice, by encouragement from the king and parliament, before whom he laid the following Scantlings, with all respect and reverence . . ." and the Marquis's own introduction again refers to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the authorities for his inventions "which he affirmed, in his Address to the King, Lords, and Commons, that he had try'd and perfected, and humbly offer'd to

perform, for the Service of the King, Advantage of the Kingdom, and Profit and Pleasure of every individual Subject."

The editor of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, perhaps uncertain of his own and his assistants' qualifications, employed what would now be described as an expert to comment on the Scantlings, and it was unfortunate for some of the inventor's bolder ideas that they betrayed a preoccupation with nautical matters, of which the expert confesses to ignorance. Thus, confronted with a plan

how to make such false decks as, in a moment, should kill and take prisoners as many as should board the ship, without blowing up the decks, or destroying them from being reducible, and in a quarter of an hour's time, should recover their former shape, and to be made as fit for employment without discovering the secret,

he can only say loftily, "I do not understand sea-faring business." Similarly, a scheme to

make a boat work itself against wind and tide, yea both without the help of man or beast, and in no point of the compass but it

shall be as effectual as if the wind were in the poop,

and another

how to make a sea castle capable of a thousand men, yet sailable at pleasure to defend a passage, or in an hour's time to divide itself into three ships, as fit and trimmed to sail as before,

only draw the bothered comment, "As I said, I don't understand sea affairs."

For an expert, in fact, the editor's special correspondent seems ignorant of a good many matters. The Marquis's idea for

a way to make a sea-bank so firm and geometrically strong, that a stream can have no power over it; excellent likewise to save the pillar of a bridge, being far cheaper and stronger than stone walls,

is received with, "I never saw a sea-bank." When the Marquis tells of

white silk knotted in the fingers of a pair of white gloves, and so contrived without suspicion, that playing at *primero* at cards, one may, without clogging his memory, keep reckoning of all sixes, sevens, and aces which he hath discarded,

all he gets for his pains is, "Primero is a game which I never heard anything

of"; and earns no better reception in describing

how to signify words, and a perfect discourse, by jangling of bells in any parish church, or by any musical instrument within hearing, in a seeming way of tuning it.

"A person must understand music," says the expert, "to understand this. Which I do not."

It seems a little hard on the Marquis, after the scornful amusement of the King, Lords and Commons, to have to submit to the critical assessment of a journalistic dunce. Even when the ideas are easily comprehensible the expert is either sceptical or disparaging. How does he receive a mild excursion into dynamics?—

How to bring up water balance-wise, so that as little weight or force as will turn a balance will be only needed, more than the weight of the water within the buckets, which, counterpoised, empty themselves one into the other, the uppermost yielding its water, how great a quantity soever it holds, at the self-same time the lowermost takes it in, tho' it be an hundred fathom high . . .

"I cannot conceive how this is possible"; or into horology?—

To set a clock in a castle, the water filling the trenches about it, that shall shew, by ebbing and flowing, the hours, minutes and seconds, and all the comprehensible motions of the heavens and counter-liberation of the earth, according to Copernicus . . .

"This is of more curiosity than use, and may be better done by a clock with weights."

The Marquis has an inspiration for making

upon the Thames a floating garden of pleasure, with trees, flowers, banqueting-houses and fountains; stews for all kinds of fish, a reserve for snow to keep wine in, delicate bathing-places and the like; with music made with mills; and all in the midst of the stream, where most rapid,

but his critic merely observes, "This requires a very roomy barge," dispersing the pretty conceit at a puff (and hardly disguising his distaste for the re-introduction of music—that dark and hidden subject).

The mind of the Marquis sweeps widely. Its creatures range from "a little engine within a coach, whereby a child may stop it" to "a chair made *alamode*, and yet a stranger being persuaded to sit in it shall have immediately his arms and thighs locked up beyond his own power to loosen them." He tells "how to write in the dark, as straight as by day or candle-light," "how to make a man fly, which I have tried with a little boy of ten years old in a barn," "how to light a fire and a candle at what hour of the night one awaketh, without rising or putting one's hand out of the bed. (And the same thing becomes a serviceable

pistol at pleasure, yet by a stranger, not knowing the secret, seemeth but a dexterous tinder-box.)"—and

how to make a brazen or stone head, in the midst of a great field or garden, so artificial and natural, that, tho' a man speak never so softly, and even whisper into the ear thereof, it will presently open its mouth and resolve the question in *French, Latin, Welsh, Irish or English*, in good terms, uttering it out of its mouth, and then shut it until the next question be asked.

"I cannot believe this practicable," says the expert wearily (for this is invention number eighty-eight, and he has nearly had enough. His brain whirls with codes and ciphers, artificial horses, little engines portable in one's pocket, unsinkable ships, fountains "to make ice, snow and thunder, with a chirping and singing of birds," and "transmittible galleries over any ditch or breach in a town wall, with a blind and parapet cannon-proof." ["I do not understand fortification."])

The Marquis is much addicted to the "little engine portable in one's pocket." He has one that, fastened on the inside of the greatest ship, "shall irrecoverably sink" it; another, "in way of tobacco tongs, whereby a man may get over a wall," another which, "taken out of one's pocket may be by himself fastened an hundred feet high, to get up from the ground." He is also considerably preoccupied with surprise firearms, and tells how

to make a key of a chamber-door, which to your sight hath its wards and rose-pipe but paper thick, and yet at pleasure in a minute shall become a perfect pistol, capable to shoot through a breast-plate commonly of carbine proof, with prime, powder and fire-lock, undiscoverable in a stranger's hand.

Also

how to make a pistol to discharge a dozen times with one loading, and without so much as once new priming requisite, or to change it out of one hand into the other, or stop one's horse.

He has variations on this idea for carbines, musquets, harquebusses and "a cannon of eight inches half-quarter, to shoot bullets of sixty-four pounds weight twenty times in six minutes, that after all were discharged, a pound of butter should not melt, being laid upon the cannon-breech . . ." and so, ever expanding, to "a way that one man in the cabin may govern the whole side of ship musquets, to the number, if need require, of two or three thousand shots . . ."

It is at this point in his two-centuries-old gropings into the realms of push-button warfare that the Marquis unveils the devil in the scientist. "When first I gave my thoughts to make guns shoot often," he writes with cackling relish, "I thought there had been but one only exquisite way inventible, yet by several trials, and much charge, I have perfectly tried all these!"

And it is at this point in my reading that I see that my sympathies have been misdirected. I coldly turn my back upon the Marquis and extend my hand to his critic—that bewildered and troubled little man—as the scratching of his quill comes to an end. For he has written here:

"All these are for the destruction of mankind; and I believe there are ways enough already discovered for that purpose; and if I could discover more, the secret should die with me."

J. B. B.



"Look, Muriel—'Monarch of the Glen'!"



"Oh, mummy, DO come and play—I MUST have a queue for my shop."

The Cosmic Mess

THIS column may have missed one or two, but in the Economic Survey for 1948 (Cmd. 7344) it has counted twenty "overalls". Of these, ten are printed with a hyphen ("over-all"), and ten are not ("overall"). Here and there, this column kindly admits, the expression may be said to earn its keep—in "the over-all deficit", for example, where the W. Paper is distinguishing between payments to the "Western Hemisphere" and transactions elsewhere. But "overall" (or "over-all") is clearly becoming a bad habit. What good does it do here, for example?—

"It is now possible to build up an estimate of the *total* national income and expenditure. From this we can judge whether *the total* of what we are attempting is *or is not* within the limits of our *overall* resources."

This column shyly suggests that all the words it has put into italics might be left out without causing any overall damage.

All three prizes and the Overall Diploma are awarded to paragraph 223 on page 50 where seven "overalls" are scored in twelve lines:

"223. The limitation of these *overall* ⁽¹⁾ calculations of the possible inflationary pressure must be borne in mind. They measure the relation between the *overall* ⁽²⁾ value of output which may be achieved and the *overall* ⁽³⁾ total of incomes which may be created. Within the *overall* ⁽⁴⁾ picture there are likely to be considerable divergencies between areas and between products. If total demand does not exceed total supply, that will not necessarily mean that demand will not be excessive in some areas and deficient in others. Nor will it mean that demand will not be excessive for some products and deficient for others. A balance between *overall* ⁽⁵⁾ supply and *overall* ⁽⁶⁾ demand will still leave particular problems and bottlenecks, and it may leave a general situation in which the pressure of demand, though not exceeding supply, tries to drive up price and wages. An *overall* ⁽⁷⁾ balance in this sense is not necessarily or even probably a situation in which all the phenomena normally associated with inflation have completely disappeared, nor one in which all physical controls could safely be removed."

This column has carefully read the paragraph several times: and, for your convenience, it has given a dear little number to each "overall". It may be wrong, but it can see no big excuse for (1), (2) or (3). It thinks (4) is detestable. It has tried to keep in (5), (6) and (7), but the overall meaning of the two sentences does not seem to be startlingly less without the words, so this column is ready to take an overall risk and let them go too.

* * * * *

It is very tiresome to have to go on saying the same thing: and this column notes with almost rebellious reluctance that in the W. Paper already immortalized in this column dear old "Other Consumers' Services" turns up again, almost unchanged and quite unrepentant. But perhaps the uncountable readers have forgotten about "Other Consumers' Services". This was a Category of Chaps mentioned in a previous W. Paper where it was discussing the Distribution of

the Industrial Population. "Other Consumers' Services" were bracketed with "Distribution": and, together, clearly, they were regarded as a pretty undesirable form of civic life, a grim contrast to the Producers and the Exporters, etc. But an incautious footnote to a mystifying Statistical Table revealed what was meant by Other Consumers' Services. It meant "Entertainment and sport, catering and hotels, laundries, commerce and finance (!), professional and personal services (!!!)".

All these were lumped together (and observe in what order!) as so many spivs, not one of whom was better than another, though all were a long way lower on the ethical ladder than the chap who was office-boy to a firm that manufactured lip-stick. This column had a few words to say, here and there, about this queer classification, and modestly thinks that it may have had some slight effect. But not enough—see paragraph 190 on page 42 of the W. Paper for 1948:

"Distribution and Services. Only small changes are shown also in distribution and other consumers' services (commerce and finance, professional and personal service, entertainment, catering, laundries, etc.). It will be necessary to restrain growth in some sections of these rather heterogeneous totals in one or other of two ways . . ."

This column offers its humble thanks to H.M. Gov. for "rather heterogeneous totals", a charming concession to some of the comments it made last year. And it gratefully acknowledges the changes made in the batting order of the spivs. "Commerce and finance" and "Professional and personal services" now go in first, ahead of Catering—and even Laundries! ("Sport", by the way, you will observe, has retired into the kindly shadows of "etc.", which, perhaps, is just as well, since it includes some not very "productive" chaps). But this column would grovel even more gratefully if H.M. Gov. would scrap the whole "heterogeneous" and crazy classification—and start again.

The architect who builds the factory: the engineer who designs, or puts in, the machinery: the scientist who provides the chemical or electrical or mechanical formulæ; the "commerce and finance" chaps who make the whole thing possible, get the works going and arrange about the exports—all these are mere "consumers' services", worthy to be diminished, while the office-boy, as aforesaid, is a big Producer. None of the professional classes—architects, engineers, designers, chemists, teachers, research workers—authors, journalists, artists

—has anything to do with "production". They are mere "consumers' services". And they are all classed with the cinema-attendant, and the lord knows what besides. This column has nothing against those useful institutions the hotel, the restaurant, and the laundry: and it has (shame!) its own uses for the book-maker. But could not the "professions" have a little corner to themselves?

* * * * *
Well, what is proposed? The W. Paper goes on thus:

"It will be necessary to restrain growth in some sections of these rather heterogeneous totals in one or other of two ways: by the use of the new labour controls where this will contribute to the manning up of essential industries, or by fiscal action to reduce inflationary pressure. In one sense these are residual totals*. The least useful 200,000, say, employed in these groups represent labour resources we should willingly use elsewhere if the materials were available for them."

(This column claims all the italics as its own).

* * * * *
Now let us examine the figures in Table XI—Distribution of the Industrial Population, 1947–1948.

* In what sense, if any?

You will then see this:

	Mid-1939 Actual	End-1947 Actual
Consumer Services ..	2,225,000	2,120,000

So the wretched Consumer Services, at the end of last year, were employing 105,000 fewer than they did in 1939: and it is hoped, when the materials are available, to employ another 200,000 "elsewhere", reducing these chaps to 1,920,000.

Very well. But now look higher in the Table, and you will see:

	Mid-1939 Actual	End-1947 Actual
Public Services—		
Civil Service ..	408,000	692,000
Other National		
Government	211,000	375,000
Local Government..	846,000	1,105,000
	1,465,000	2,172,000

—an increase of 707,000.

What has the W. Paper to say about that? It says:

"It is doubtful whether anything in the development of public policy will lead to large reductions in these totals."

All right—all right. This column does not want to get into an argument. In fact, it is inclined to agree. Indeed, it awards that assertion All Three Prizes for Quiet Under-statement.

A. P. H.



"Carry your bride, sir?"

"IT is probable that when the Elizabethan dramatist took his ink-horn and sat down to his work he used many phrases that he had just heard, as he sat at dinner, from his mother or his children . . . This matter, I think, is of importance, for in countries where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality, which is the root of all poetry, in a comprehensive and natural form . . . In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple, and such speeches cannot be written by anyone who works among people who have shut their lips on poetry . . ." SYNGE's preface to *The Playboy of the Western World* is worth reading again because, although somewhat rashly it wrote off the "intellectual modern drama" as a failure, it is an eloquent plea for the theatre to call on the whole wealth of speech; and especially worth reading now, when several young dramatists are showing us once more that English is capable of organ-music and needn't be confined to the piccolo. The description of how SYNGE topped up his vocabulary through a chink in the floor of an old house in Wicklow, listening to the talk of the girls in the kitchen below, makes one wonder to what floors some modern dramatists can have been glueing their ears.

Mr. DENIS CAREY's production of this classic Irish comedy at the Mercury is true to the feeling of Mayo and I could almost smell potheen, though I have seen its effects more convincingly simulated. And *Christopher*, who can easily be made simply an ass, is given his full weight of pathetic frustration by Mr. LIAM REDMOND. He plays him very quietly, and as the amazing benefits of bungled patricide begin to pour into his lap his innocent joy is such as must be shared. Miss EITHNE DUNNE is a good, sharp *Peegen Mike*, with a whip of a tongue to set off tenderness, while Miss ELSPETH MARCH catches the urgency of the *Widow Quin*, though I think of this man-eater as more astringent. A truly

At the Play

The Playboy of the Western World (MERCURY)—*Hog's Blood and Hellebore* (BOLTONS)—*Paulette* (NEW LINDSEY).

formidable *Mahon* is conjured by Mr. HUGH GRIFFITH, rolling his Old Testament eyes, and Mr. HARRY WEBSTER makes as spirited a western publican as ever dispensed firewater out of hours.

There is a play at the Boltons with the anæmic title of *Hog's Blood and Hellebore* which is much funnier than it has any right to be. The background is true to the tritest conventions of

irresistible. It is hoped the novelist, who is unconscious of her changed appearance, will be restored by the arts of the cook next door; this retired but notorious witch proves rusty, however, and her insistence that nothing can be done without a hedgehog is not helpful. Her visit is the high spot of the evening, and provides Performance No. 1, by Miss MAY HALLATT. Mr. IVOR BARNARD, Miss MIGNON O'DOHERTY, Miss ESMÉ BERINGER and Mr. ERIC MATURIN lead the revels. In its present form the play's chances are dim, but pruned and trimmed by an experienced hand Miss ANTONY's originality might carry it far.

The New Lindsey has slipped with *Paulette*, a silly play by Miss EDITH SAVAGE-GRAHAM and Mr. LEON M. LION. One had imagined that a novice failing to return by midnight to a French convent in the 'nineties would unleash all kinds of things, including bloodhounds; but not at all. The nymph errant is gently chided when she does turn up, and only asked to withdraw after it is proved that she is carrying on with a married man; with whom she soon decamps, never to be seen by us again, though we get a discouraging report from Paris that sin has made her very happy. Her sister, more devout, reaches her initiation ceremony before discovering her love for the nice young man discarded by the runaway, and there is then a curious scene in which the two embrace with passion before an altar while the Mother Superior looks on wistfully. Well, well. The acting is uneven, but relieved by a delightful performance by Miss CHILI BOUCHIER as a worldly, sympathetic aunt. Miss LORRAINE ELLIS, who is charmingly natural as the little sister, Miss DIANA HOPE as the truant and Mr. ANTHONY FORWOOD as the youth are otherwise the pick. ERIC.

"DRAWN GAME WITH BANK"
Sussex paper.

The overdrawn game is, of course, not "news."



(*The Playboy of the Western World*)

IRISH STEW

Christopher Mahon Mr. LIAM REDMOND
Old Mahon Mr. HUGH GRIFFITH

village comedy, but just as we despair after a first act we seem to have seen thousands of times before, Miss JONQUIL ANTONY turns unexpectedly to the decidedly unexpected. That is what I should call a henpecked vicar dabbling secretly in magic with a mad major and a gibbering spinster; their addition of a large pig's head to an intolerable woman-novelist; and what happens to the vicar's booming wife when everything seems nicely settled. The play is put together roughly, rather as a child would sew, but, while the size of the stitches hits one in the eye, once the *Rev. Foskett* gets the Devil's wavelength the situations are

At the Opera

Il Tabarro and Lady Rohesia
(SADLER'S WELLS)

Falstaff (CAMBRIDGE)

ANTONY HOPKINS' "operatic frolic in one act," *Lady Rohesia*, is now running in double harness at Sadler's Wells with PUCCINI'S *Il Tabarro*. A brilliant cast, headed by RODERICK JONES, FRANK SALE and VICTORIA SLADEN, screws the last ounce of drama and horror out of PUCCINI'S macabre little tragedy of the Parisian waterfront. But to have one's withers wrung for the space of an hour is quite sufficient, and *Lady Rohesia*, lunacy utter and complete, provides excellent relaxation. An operatic extravaganza is a dangerous experiment, but this one has come off very successfully, thanks to the light touch of the composer-librettist and his designer and producer, TANYA MOISEWITSCH and GEOFFREY DUNN.

The setting represents *Lady Rohesia*'s sixteenth-century bedchamber. The lady's decease is confidently expected. The opera opens with a prologue à la Pagliacci, by Herr Kochenocher (HERVEY ALAN), "the distinguished repetiteur" from Hamburg, who comes before the curtain to air his views on things in general and modern music in particular. For the rest of the evening we are to witness his frenzied efforts to keep the right characters singing the right opera—a task which gets more and more out of hand. Near the beginning the maid (ROSE HILL) makes a sudden excursion into Italian opera, declaring that she really cannot remember this modern stuff; eventually *Lady Rohesia* (KATE JACKSON) rises from her death-bed to administer a resounding whack from her warming-pan to the head of her spouse, interrupting the love-scene in progress between him and her would-be successor in his affections. After this things go from bad to worse. The maid turns into a Roman lady with a distempering-brush and a penchant for noughts and crosses, and stands on a ladder to sing an interlude; and when the curtain rises again all the characters have got mixed up and keep appearing as characters from *Carmen*, *Lohengrin* or *Pagliacci*. The one stable factor (if one can call it that) is the competition in Latinity between the doctor (HOWELL GLYNNE) and the priest (TOM CULBERT), who counters the doctor's solemn "*Ars longa, vita brevis*" with an equally solemn "*Pax vobiscum*," only to be routed by a triumphant "*Hic, hæc, hoc!*" It is a highly entertaining piece of foolery,



"The blessed power's gone off again."

and those who like guessing-games will enjoy trying to spot the musical allusions. The composer conducts.

The name of MARIANO STABILE as the singer of the title-rôle in VERDI'S *Falstaff* will alone be sufficient to draw opera-lovers to see CARL EBERT'S production at the Cambridge Theatre, and they will not be disappointed. STABILE'S *Falstaff* has all the richness, grossness, vanity, swashbuckling bluster and effrontery that one could wish for, and dignity as well. Added to this is the (for an English audience) piquant combination of the Shakespearean theme, Italian music and *Falstaff*'s heavy paunch, dumpling nose and flashing Sicilian gestures. The whole production is seasoned with exotic touches of the same kind. The Windsor in which these Merry Wives frolic is wondrously translated. *Sir John* quaffs his sack in a German beer-cellar at a Garter Inn which, from its outer aspect, is evidently situated at Grinzing; while *Mr. Ford*'s garden, with its tapestry-like formality, has clearly been transported from Nuremberg. *Pistol* and *Bardolph*, too, for all that they are rechristened *Pistola* and *Bardolfo*, have walked out of a picture by Pieter Breughel. This scenic unexpectedness of HEIN HECKROTH'S provides a link of fantasy with the fairy scene of the last act, which is beautifully devised

—so beautifully that we feel that a deception has been practised upon us and that the Merry Wives have been bewitched and have really turned into the fairies they pretend to be in order to frighten the fat knight. No wonder that their portly victim is able without malice or bitterness to join in the brilliantly - executed fugue at the end.

Apart from Signor STABILE'S, it is impossible to single out for special mention any one performance in this excellent production, for the opera contains no rôle for a prima donna. The contrast between the resonant bass and tall figure of MARCO STEFANONI as *Pistola* and the diminutive twanginess of TONY SYMPSON'S *Bardolfo* is everywhere made the most of—and that is saying a great deal. *Pistola* is here a ruffian with an aristocratic air, whereas *Bardolfo*, though his nose is like a beacon, has the degraded yet pathetic aspect of a starving mongrel. The young lovers *Nanetta* and *Fenton* (DARYA BAYAN and AGOSTINO LAZZARI) are like a pair of turtle-doves; and the merry gossips *Mistress Page* and *Mistress Ford* (BRUNA MACLEAN and EMMA TEGANI) and their servitor *Mistress Quickly* (MARY STEWART) are melodious and a feast to the eye. ALBERTO EREDE conducts brilliantly. D. C. B.



"Shoe-shine, please. All THEY do is chalk my room number on the soles."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

A New Statesman Miscellany

IN *Turnstile One* (TURNSTILE PRESS, 10/6), Mr. V. S. PRITCHETT has made a selection from the stories, verse and essays contributed to the *New Statesman* since it absorbed the *Nation* in 1931. He has also included a few earlier pieces, the most interesting of which is a letter D. H. Lawrence wrote from Germany in 1928. Lawrence's philosophy of what he called the Dark Unconscious had a close affinity to Nazism, and in this letter he showed his intuition of "the ancient spirit of prehistoric Germany coming back." The volume as a whole gives a fairly comprehensive panorama of the literary talent of the last two decades. Among the poets are W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, W. J. Turner, Roy Campbell and Walter de la Mare. Among the writers of short stories are H. E. Bates, Elizabeth Bowen, William Plomer and V. S. Pritchett. Among the critics and essayists are Clive Bell, Raymond Mortimer, David Garnett, Desmond MacCarthy, Cyril Connolly, Peter Quennell and G. W. Stonier. The fact that everything in this volume has appeared in the *New Statesman* may incline the reader to detect a general tone running through all the contributions, a tone very audible in Mr. Clive Bell's "We of the better sort, we who read poetry and go to exhibitions and talk about books and pictures." But there is really a great deal of variety in this book, both in manner and matter, ranging from Roy Campbell's "The Zulu Girl" to a very interesting suggestion, in a letter, that Milton's blindness was only partial. H. K.

A Practice in Bangkok

To the most popular of all books on Siam—those by King Mongkut's secretary and governess, Mrs. Leonowens—*A Physician at the Court of Siam* (COUNTRY LIFE, 15/-) provides both a supplement and a corrective. The physician, Dr. MALCOLM SMITH, practised in Bangkok for twenty-one years; and he tells the story of the royal dynasty rather than his own. For although accredited to the British Legation, with the duty of witnessing native executions of Imperial Asiatic subjects, he became early attached to the court and ended his Siamese days as medical attendant to the Dowager Queen Saowapa. The interest of the book—which is all interesting—is divided between straight history, professional concentration on the sanitary results of native manners, and the personal friendship, entertainment and emolument the author got out of his inimitable Dowager. He has a much more sympathetic view than Mrs. Leonowens of polygamy and life in "The Inside." His account of King Mongkut, a Buddhist monk when called to the throne at forty-six, is more enthusiastic. But for intimacy and humour there is nothing to match his nocturnal meals with Queen Saowapa: meals during which, as the doctor was compelled to sit on the floor, he could push fritters of bees' drone-cells under the royal bed without incurring a charge of *lèse-majesté*. H. P. E.

Harrow School

Harrow School: Yesterday and To-day (WINCHESTER PUBLICATIONS, 30/-), a beautifully illustrated book, is, in the words of the headmaster of Harrow, "a faithful and scrupulous guide to the buildings, Houses and institutions of the School, their history, their *arcana*, their embellishments and treasures, and the legends that cling to them." The author, Dr. E. D. LABORDE, a master at Harrow since 1919, has clearly been animated by a profound and unflagging enthusiasm for his subject: Harrow School is usually supposed to have been founded under Elizabeth by John Lyon, but Dr. LABORDE adduces evidence to prove that it already existed in the fourteenth century, and claims that John Lyon would therefore be more accurately described as "benefactor" than as "founder." It was in the middle of the eighteenth century, under Thomas Thackeray, a friend of the Prince of Wales, that Harrow began to develop into a fashionable boarding-school, a change which, as Dr. LABORDE puts it, "caused the local inhabitants to shrink from sending their sons to the School." In 1845, when Vaughan became headmaster, the School, which had been declining, revived, entering on a very prosperous period which lasted till well into the present century; and it is now, after a partial eclipse, itself again. This volume admirably fulfils its purpose of describing a famous institution in its historical and external manifestations. So far as the actual boys are concerned, the author's standpoint may be inferred from "Like his immediate predecessors, [Dr. Welldon] kept the School sweet by his impressive sermons." H. K.

Vie de Bohème

One can always evoke a certain tenderness for the pioneer effaced by more brilliant successors; and Henry Mürger, without whom there would possibly have been no Trilby, well deserves revival. ARTHUR MOSS and EVALYN MARVEL, an American husband and wife who know their Paris, retrace *The Legend of the Latin Quarter* (ALLEN, 10/6) when, its day as a citadel solely of scholars well behind it, it became the mid-nineteenth-century stronghold of the arts.

Their practice, as Mürger himself admitted, led to the hospital, the morgue or the *Académie*; and there is indubitably an out-at-elbows splendour in living always on the dangerous edge of things as did Mürger, Champfleury, Courbet, Baudelaire and their womenfolk. The Musettes and Mimis—Mürger had four—shared the fluctuating fortunes of their partners and could display, on occasion, considerably more fidelity and practical devotion than is now expected of matrimony. The biographers tend to over-rate their hero. True, Mürger's "Vie de Bohème," starting as a series of short stories, won its writer the Legion of Honour. "A good boulevard play," said Napoleon III, "gives a man a standing." The dramatist could not afford a new red ribbon when the first wore out; but he had a *belle enterrement* whose atmosphere the long cortège of memorable names that files through these sympathetic pages impressively re-echoes.

H. P. E.

Burnt Bart.

There is no shame in being defeated by Mr. MICHAEL INNES, and much pleasure in the process. He writes far too well to bother his head with corpses, but since he does we can be grateful for a story as erudite, amusing and diabolically inventive as *A Night of Errors* (GOLLANCZ, 8/6). It recalls from retirement the resourceful Appleby, who is excellent company. But by the sinister fabric of the Dromio Case even Appleby is obliged to think hard. Arson in a great country house; a butchered and toasted baronet who may be himself and may equally be either of his triplet brothers; the purplest scandals in two well-found county families; extensive ancillary slaughter—these are enough to be going on with, but they are not the half of it. There is little cut and dried about a case in which most of the starters in a lengthy list of suspects are as warped as old boots and on which the post-prandial visions of the Rev. Greengrave bear vitally. To this endearing clergyman we grow deeply attached. Einstein and Dunne in harness might possibly trace a weak link in Mr. INNES's reasoning. We shall be content to put on record that not for one moment do we believe in his suggestion, acceptable as it may be found in Oporto, that a lifetime spent in the serious consumption of vintage port is a guarantee against death in a blaze capable of melting pewter in the same room.

E. O. D. K.

Windows on Arabia

Apart from its style, which is deplorable, H. ST. JOHN B. PHILBY's autobiography, *Arabian Days* (ROBERT HALE, 21/-), contains information of great interest. The first forty pages deal with the author's early life and have, perhaps, a limited appeal; but as soon as he goes to Mesopotamia as Financial Assistant to the Chief Political Officer the interest quickens; the reader is given glimpses of the war against the Turks, the birth of Iraq as a modern country, life in the deserts, with convincing portraits of the personalities—Gertrude Bell, T. E. Lawrence, Sir Percy Cox and a dozen other now legendary figures—of recent Arabian history. Mr. PHILBY himself had a great deal to do with most of the events which shaped Middle East destiny. An individualist, not afraid of voicing his own opinions and criticisms, he was often in conflict with his immediate superiors and his unconventional attitude to the "taboos" of the East (not drinking water until it is boiled, the dangers of eating dates) shocked the English colony. Few men had greater knowledge of what went on behind the scenes in

Arabian matters and few were better qualified—for the author speaks fluent Urdu, Panjabi, Baluchi, Persian, Pashtu and Arabic, besides having a good knowledge of French and German—to deal with the Arabs. He is sharp, outspoken and acid in his judgments and his pen sketches of his surroundings and collaborators; and, perhaps inevitably, he left service under the British to be near Ibn Sa'ud.

The Stream of Days (LONGMANS, GREEN, 8/6), by TAHA HUSSEIN (translated from the Arabic by HILARY WAYMENT), is, on the other hand, a quiet, beautifully written work of art. The author's previous book, *An Egyptian Childhood*, described a blind Egyptian boy's infant years; the present volume deals with his adolescence in the Cairo University of Azhar, an establishment which, though in fact of the last century, might well have belonged to the universities at the time of Martin Luther. There is the same *rigor mortis* of tradition, the emphasis lies heavily on dogma and theological interpretation, everything is stylized. The young boy, still blind, lost and sightless within himself, only able to interpret the world around him through his other senses, is led from his lonely room in the student tenement building where his brother lives, to the mosque, where he hears learned discourses on Tafsir (interpretation of the Koran) or Tawhid (doctrine of One God). For the rest the boy is ignored, forgotten, doomed to isolation; in consequence his senses are terribly developed—he savours tea, hears voices, listens in agony to other people enjoying themselves in a world of light he can never enter and which for him remains imageless and blank—and his misery is finally alleviated by the arrival of a lifelong friend from his village. The translation is admirably smooth and clear, and the autobiography itself is a masterpiece of tender pathos.

R. K.





"Mummy, why is he pushing those horses across the field?"

Underground Movement

AS a rule I am not particularly good at "placing" people, but the man with the unmilitary moustache and quivering nostrils was clearly something in the City. Every inch of him advertised his calling. His heavily underwritten eyes said "For us Ordinary shares are always Equities." His oversubscribed chins announced "The Stock Exchange to you: 'The House' to us." His nose, indicative of a marked liquidity preference, proclaimed "These miserable suburban ne'er-do-wells have probably never heard of a one-way option stock, a protected bear or a redemption yield."

His weight was about two hundred pounds: more than half of it rested on my left foot.

"Would you mind, sir?" I said, pointing to the floor. "Courtesy aids service, you know."

He grunted, transferred his briefcase from his right hand to his left, and removed his foot.

"Gets worse on this line," he said.

"Worse than a cattle-truck this morning."

"Cattle are never humiliated like this."

There was so much feeling in his voice that I was shocked into an immediate revision of my judgment.

"You are *in* cattle then, perhaps?" I said.

"*In* cattle?"

"No? For a moment I saw you bulk-purchasing in the stockyards of Rosario or Chicago."

He looked me hard in the face—wondering, no doubt, whether to risk a trapeze-swing to another strap.

"I said that cattle are never humiliated like this, sir," he shouted, "because I wished to point out that cattle stand squarely on four legs, occupy six times as much floor-space as human beings and are six times as comfortable when travelling by rail."

I could think of no reply to this.

"It is my belief, sir," he resumed, "that bipedestrianism was thrust upon

man by unscrupulous traffic managers and sports-promoters."

"You think, then, that we should be better on all fours?"

"Man's decline dates from the moment he became permanently rampant . . ."

The sliding doors opened and a score of flustered bipeds stormed the solid barrier of flesh and damp raincoat. I was thrown closer than ever against my interlocutor so that I could feel his heart beating against my diary.

"Go on about Life," I said.

"Well, consider the four-footed animal's advantages. His head is nearer the ground, so he breathes cooler, purer air. He eats from the ground upwards, uphill, against the force of gravity . . ."

"g," I said.

"Exactly. And eating against 'g' is natural. Eating *with* 'g' is unnatural. We humans eat too easily, too quickly—hence indigestion."

"But surely, these advantages are as nothing compared with the fact

that the upright posture leaves man with two hands free?"

"You call this free!" he said, releasing the strap and crashing through a copy of the *Daily Mail* into the lap of an elderly female biped. "And in any case could man have invented atom bombs, telephones, iron curtains, and cinema organs with his four limbs planted firmly on the ground?"

"Heh, wait a minute . . .!"

"I go further," he said, "and claim that nearly all the evils that beset man—false pride, tribal and racial jealousy and hatred, aggressive nationalism—are attributable to his dramatic change of posture. When men walked on all fours . . ."

"You're standing on my foot again," I said.

" . . . they were all equal—equal in height and power, or very nearly so, and equal in opportunity. And another thing, my friend, they were much more efficient. The human stomach, heart, liver and the rest were all designed . . ."

"Quite, quite," I said, trying to press the toe-cap of my right shoe back into shape, "but it's bad enough having just *two* feet crushed to pulp."

"When the body is carried on four legs the weight on each is very small. However, I'm supposed to get off here."

"You could try," I said.

I took my umbrella out of his trouser turn-up and he struggled for the doors.

As the train restarted I caught a glimpse of him, crouched in a humiliating quadrupedal attitude on the platform. Hod.

o o

A Removal Problem

SOME little time ago I discussed in these pages the true facts about St. Bernard dogs and their advantages and disadvantages as household pets. I must now admit that my disclosures were premature. My information was not at the time complete. I had not then experienced the awful and terrible disadvantage of a St. Bernard when you want to move house.

(For the benefit of excited readers whose interest has now switched from St. Bernards to houses, I must here make it clear that the house we moved from was taken over immediately. Earlier than immediately, in fact; the new tenant had his furniture-vans parked outside for nearly a week before

we left, waiting impatiently for a chance to rush his stuff indoors.)

A St. Bernard is not one of your more athletic beasts. Like many others, no doubt including my present readers, I was deceived by the pictures of St. Bernards ceaselessly tramping through the snowy mountains looking for benighted travellers. I now realize that this is either a complete myth, or another breed of dog. The real, the authentic St. Bernard such as I possess would not tramp into the next room if he could help it. He likes to get his exercise by lying and dreaming about chasing cats. At that, I imagine he dreams about other dogs doing the chasing for him, and himself just watching.

Another aspect exposing the mountain fabrication is that St. Bernards have no head for heights. They will not even climb stairs. They are strictly ground-floor dogs. They refuse so much as to place one tentative forepaw on the bottom stair. You could leave your Sunday joint halfway up the stairs and be sure of finding it there when you got back.

When we moved house, then, Marcus,

our St. Bernard, presented a problem. The distance was only six miles, but I felt a delicacy about proposing to Marcus that he should walk. The obvious solution was to send him along in the pantechicon with the rest of the heavy stuff. The obvious difficulty was to get him inside the pantechicon.

We—the pantechicon staff, my wife, and myself—stood around Marcus and surveyed him while he got in a little rest on the garden path.

"Just get him to trot up the tail-board," suggested the foreman. "You could chirrup to him."

The foreman was of course completely out of touch with St. Bernards. Just to satisfy him, my wife herself trotted encouragingly up and down the tail-board a few times, while I chirruped as desired. Marcus raised his massive head and regarded me lovingly, and then, feeling that he had taken his fair share in the conversation, went back to sleep.

"There's six of us," panted my wife. "I dare say between us we could lift him in."

The foreman and his three underlings looked at Marcus's bear-like form



PERIOD PIECE

and crocodile-like teeth, and firmly said they were sure we couldn't. The foreman, however, offered to rig a block-and-tackle, if I had such a thing.

I hadn't.

In the end the pantechnicon went off with all our belongings except Marcus. I began to fear we should have to class Marcus as a tenant's fixture, to be taken over at valuation. My wife, however, said that for once in my life I must be firm with him and make him walk.

"My dear!" I protested. "He'd never forgive me if I so much as suggested a six-mile walk to him."

"Well, don't suggest it, then. Let him think it's just his usual daily walk. I'll go ahead and look after the unloading at the other end."

"Minjerbacks!" shouted the foreman with the incoming load, supervising the entry of the kitchen table (not such a nice one as ours). I sat down unhappily on Marcus's rump, feeling very lonely and homeless as our successors pointedly shut the front door.

My wife went off. I got up, prodded Marcus into the somnambulistic state that passes for wakefulness in a St. Bernard, and strode ahead hopefully to the gate.

"Walks, boy, walks!" I cried.

His tail and ears drooped, and he looked at me with mute reproach. Philosophically deciding to get the ordeal over, he ambled to the next corner, which is the limit he has set on his daily walk ever since he was old enough to know his own strength. Then, disregarding my protests, he ambled back again and lay down to recuperate.

We were back where we started.

I will draw a veil over the following hour, during which I pleaded with,

reasoned with, snivelled at, and commanded my comatose St. Bernard. But I triumphed ultimately. It would be gross flattery to credit Marcus with possessing a mind, but he has a sort of blind instinct that reacts with uncanny shrewdness to one thing and to one thing alone—food. I somehow managed to make it clear that he got no food unless he bent himself to my wishes. With an enormous sigh of self-pity, he heaved himself to his vast feet, glowered at me sulkily, and set off at normal St. Bernard pace, which is approximately one-third of a mile per hour.

We stayed that night at the Hare and Hounds, a mile and a half away. Marcus did the last half-mile in his sleep. We both had to sleep downstairs in the lounge, because Marcus would not be parted from me, but neither would he trust himself to the stairs.

By getting away to an early start in the morning, we covered the best part of three miles before nightfall. I still consider this must be a record for the distance travelled in one day by a St. Bernard. We put up at the Star, an old-fashioned inn with stables. They made Marcus sleep in the stables, which meant that I had to sleep in the stables too. However, I didn't mind. The end of our trek was approaching. I was able to telephone my wife—who had long since got her home in order, and who told me that my absence was already causing malicious gossip locally—and report our progress to her. I said that if all went well she could expect us the next day, which she refused to believe.

All did go well, though I had to shout into Marcus's ear for ten solid minutes in the morning before I could get him to show a leg. He was now showing the effects of his forced march,

and his first brisk turn of speed had slowed down appreciably. The shades of night were falling when we turned the last corner and saw the welcome lights of home shining ahead of us.

Marcus made it. With a gallantry of which I cannot speak too highly, he managed to totter indoors before his unconquerable spirit gave out and he sank to the ground with a noise like another mighty monarch of the forest falling beneath the woodman's axe. By a supercanine effort he remained awake just long enough to wolf down ten pounds of horseflesh, three loaves of stale bread, and a few lumps of coal. Then he fell into a deep slumber in which he remained for thirty-six hours.

Unfortunately, we weren't there when he awakened. We'd reckoned on sleep holding him for another twelve hours at least, and we wanted to be there when he woke because my wife said it would make him nervous and frightened, waking in a strange house.

But he woke alone, and probably rather peckish. That unpredictable instinct of his must have worked again. When we came back he had vanished.

Eight days later the man at our old home rang up to say that a travel-stained St. Bernard had just staggered wearily into the house and collapsed on the door-mat in a dead faint.

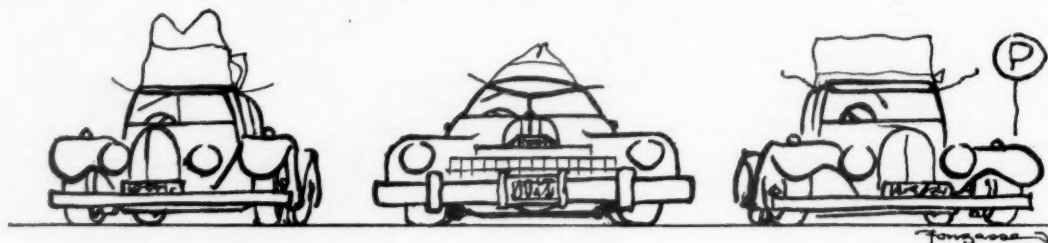
I sighed. I picked up my stick. And, kissing my wife good-bye for another few days, I went off to fetch Marcus.

o o

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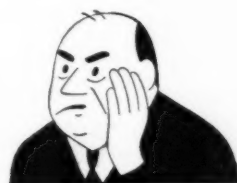


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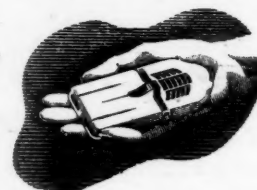
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*The fable
of the
foolish
young man*

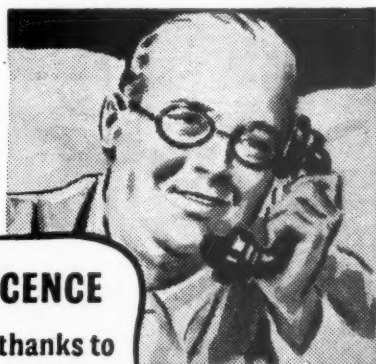
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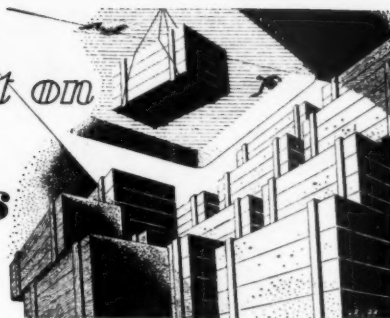
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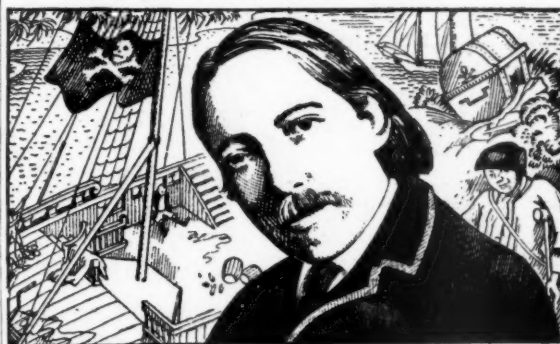


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to his father and mother

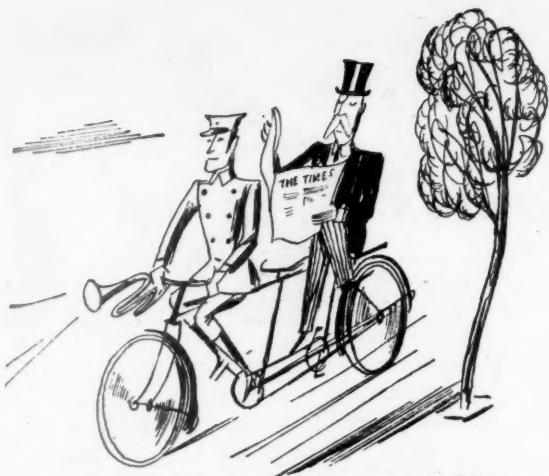
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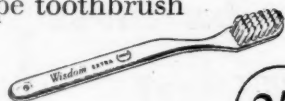
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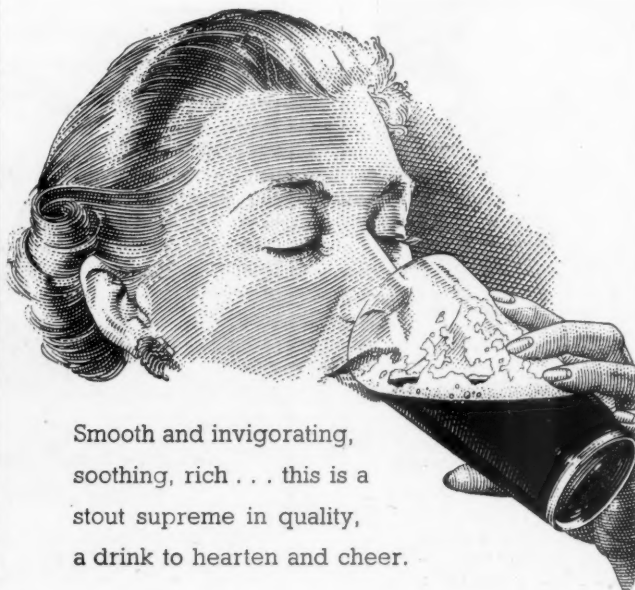
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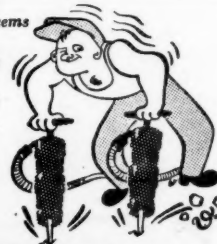


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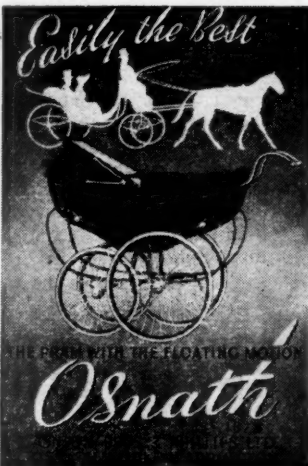
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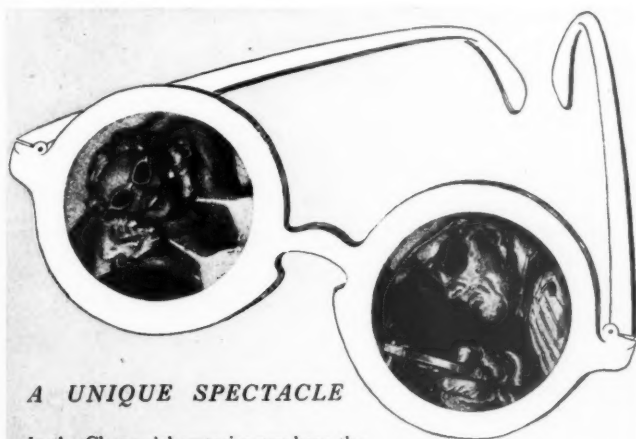
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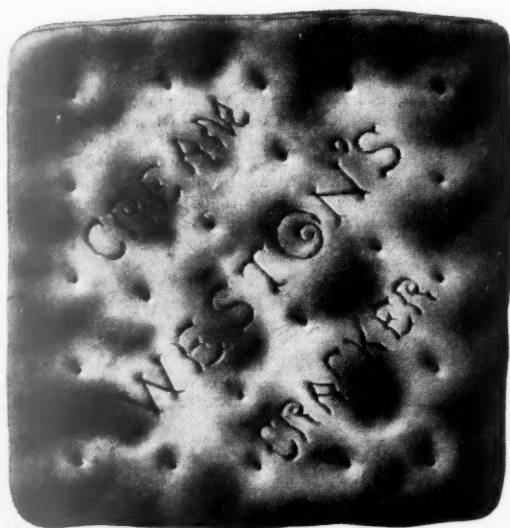
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